

## **EPA, Utah agreement to resolve Gold King Mine claims**

Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the State of Utah announced an agreement resolving the State's legal claims associated with the 2015 Gold King Mine release in southwest Colorado. Pursuant to the agreement, Utah will dismiss its legal claims against the EPA and the United States, as well as EPA's contractors, and EPA will strengthen Utah's involvement in the Agency's work to address contamination at the Bonita Peak Mining District Superfund site, which includes the Gold King Mine and other abandoned mines. EPA will also continue to partner with Utah on other environmental priorities, including the assessment of abandoned mine sites in Utah that may be impacting its waters as well as other projects to improve Utah's water quality.

"This agreement is a positive step towards allowing both EPA and Utah to focus efforts and resources on improving environmental quality for our communities rather than litigation" **said EPA General Counsel Matthew Z. Leopold**. "Our partnership with Utah will be stronger as we continue to support the State in addressing its water quality needs."

"EPA greatly appreciates Utah's efforts to resolve these claims and identify opportunities to work together to improve water quality," **said EPA Regional Administrator Gregory Sopkin**. "We are committed to continuing to work with the State to address the root causes of water quality impairments in Utah, including abandoned mines. The projects and activities in this agreement will result in improvements to Utah's waters and the benefits they provide residents and visitors."

As part of the agreement, EPA will act on the Utah Department of Environmental Quality's application for \$3 million in Clean Water Act funds for various projects, including the development of water quality criteria for Utah Lake, septic density studies, nonpoint source pollution reduction projects, and nutrient management plans for agricultural sources. EPA will also initiate Superfund assessments of several abandoned mine sites in Utah by the end of calendar year 2021.

EPA has several other initiatives focused on improving water quality for Utah's citizens. EPA is committed to continuing its work at the Bonita Peak Mining District Superfund Site, which includes the Gold King Mine. EPA is providing Utah with opportunities for substantial and meaningful involvement in EPA's ongoing Superfund activities at the Site. EPA is expecting to spend upwards of \$120 million on the Bonita Peak Mining District Superfund Site over the next several years.

EPA will also continue its work on abandoned mine sites that have the potential to impact downstream waters in Utah. Along with others, these sites include the Rico Argentine Mine Site, the Camp Bird Mine Site, and the Carribeau Mine Area. In addition to the planned work at the Bonita Peak Mining District Superfund Site, EPA expects to spend as much as \$100 million on other abandoned mining sites with the potential to improve Utah's water quality.

